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From: Keener, Bill
Sent: Thur 8/13/2015 10:36:12 PM
Subject: Superfund mine sites in the Sierras

Ken, thanks for your question stemming from the EPA Administrator's message to the Regions yesterday:

"While we continue to investigate the root causes of last week's release of mining waste at the Gold King Mine in Colorado, we are instructing our Regions to immediately cease any field investigation work at mines including tailings facilities, unless there is imminent risk in a specific case. We are in the process of initiating an independent assessment by a sister federal agency or another external entity to examine the factors that led to last week's incident. Based on the outcome from that assessment, we will determine what actions may be necessary to avoid similar incidents at other sites. While we stand down on existing field investigations and assessments at these mining sites, we also are instructing our Regions to identify existing sites with similarities to the Gold King Mine site and to identify any immediate threats and consider appropriate response actions."

I checked in with Superfund program staff here in the San Francisco office, and they are working on this right now – going over the status of every mine site EPA is involved with, including those in the Sierras. I hope to have some information about the impact of the Administrator's instruction tomorrow. Sorry I cannot give a more definitive answer now, but as you can imagine, we are just getting to our review of the situation today.

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